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MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT FOR GOSPORT
LEE ON THE SOLENT • STUBBINGTON • HILL HEAD



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The October newsletter hits your inbox on a spooky Halloween evening, only a day after a no less scary Chancellor's Budget in Westminster. It was long awaited and much trailed/leaked with early announcements around cutting Winter Fuel Payments for pensioners and imposing VAT on independent schools. We finally got to hear what tricks and treats the Labour Government have up their sleeves.

While we are still pouring over the fine print, you can see my instant reaction to the Budget in a short video that I made [here](#). **While the top lines are £40 billion of tax increases, higher borrowing, more spending and a downgrading of our predicted National growth**, here are some of the ways I feel it will impact our local area.

Employer National Insurance Contributions: For all but the smallest businesses in the Gosport area NICs will rise by 1.2% to 15%, and the threshold at which it kicks in is lowered. This will increase businesses costs and is likely to have a negative knock-on effect on jobs and wages, particularly in sectors like childcare and care homes, with rising prices no doubt likely to be passed to consumers.

Fuel Duty: It's welcome that the Chancellor agreed to provide a 1-year extension to the Conservatives' fuel duty freeze. I was part of the FairFuel campaign and wrote to Rachel Reeves stressing the importance of this measure. You can read it [here](#).

Business Rates: 40% relief will be provided to Retail, Hospitality and Leisure sectors for 2025-2026, with a £110,000 cash cap per business. But UK Hospitality are saying this will be drowned out by the £3 billion tax increases on hospitality businesses via job and property taxes.

Inheritance Tax: Unused pension funds and death benefits from a pension will be included in the value of estates from 6 April 2027. This means that pension benefits of a late spouse will be subjected to inheritance tax.

Carer's Allowance: As co-chair of the All-Party Parliament Group for Carers in the last Parliament I welcome the increase in the earnings limit for carers from April 2025. I would still like to see the implementation of the National



Carers Strategy. I recently met with Carers UK to discuss what else can be done to ensure that unpaid carers receive the support and assistance they need.

Local Growth: I am pleased to hear that local projects that were announced by the previous Government in the Levelling Up Fund have received funding in this budget. This means that we will now get the long-awaited £18 million for the Rum Store renovation at Royal Clarence Yard and waterfront improvements.

Flooding: £2.4 billion will be allocated over 2024-25 and 2025-26 to support flood resilience. In light of this national funding, I am keen to see the Gosport constituency on the list of recipients in order to cover the costs of essential works on Alverstoke Flood Defences.

You can access the full version of the Budget [here](#). If you feel that you need support or assistance in light of the policy announcements that bring the highest tax hikes in history, please do get in touch with my office.

In Westminster this month, I asked the Prime Minister about the funding for the Alverstoke Flood Defences and was disappointed with his response. With the risk of flooding here now increasing to 1 in 20 years from 1 in 100 years, I think readers will agree that we need money for this essential work now and cannot afford to wait for the establishment and conclusions of the Government's "Flood Resilience Taskforce". You can watch my contribution in the Chamber [here](#).

Shortly after, I met with the Minister for Water and Flooding, Emma Hardy MP, to reiterate my point about the urgency of this funding, and to encourage the Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs to introduce a national flood awareness campaign. You can find out more about how to protect your home in an emergency [here](#).



I questioned the Foreign Secretary on the Government's controversial decision to cede sovereignty of the British Indian Ocean Territory (Chagos Islands) to Mauritius. Many aspects of the treaty were not clarified before signing and I am worried what it means for other Overseas Territories like Gibraltar and the Falkland Islands. You can watch my contribution in the Chamber [here](#).



The Culture, Media and Sport Select Committee, which I Chair, was officially reconstituted. You can find out more about the Committee and its membership [here](#).

I caught up with Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) Secretary of State, Lisa Nandy MP, to talk about our priorities for the sectors in the new Parliament.

In the Chamber, I welcomed that the Government have decided to implement the British Independent Film Tax Credits announced in the last Conservative Budget – a measure that my CMS Select Committee had pushed for. I asked Lisa Nandy to build on this progress and ensure that the promised tax relief for visual effects (VFX) costs was introduced. I was pleased that this was included in the Budget - you can listen to my pre-Budget plea for this [here](#).

I also urged DCMS Ministers to commit to the Conservatives' £35 million pledge for cricket domes in cities across England [here](#). With the Women's T20 World Cup here in 2026 and cricket joining the next Olympics, we must support our grassroots and further develop talent pathways.

Concerned about the Government's comments that "new law may be needed to end AI copyright dispute", I wrote to both the Culture Secretary and the Science and Technology Secretary to highlight how, in wanting to maximise the economic potential of AI, revisiting the Text & Data Mining Exception will damage human creators and their intellectual property. You can read my letter [here](#).

I was also glad to be re-elected as co-chair of the Parliamentary Internet, Communications and Technology Forum (PICTFOR) which is the interface between Parliament and the tech and digital sectors.

I hosted the People's Postcode Lottery Funding Workshop for local charities and volunteers from across our area. Additional funding can be groundbreaking for not-for-profit organisations especially at times of increasing financial pressures. If you would like to find out more about funding applications, please get in touch.

I was delighted to meet Bridge to Unity in Parliament. The organisation supports refugees in our region, and they collaborated with my office to bring a group of 40 Ukrainians for a tour in Westminster. Find out more about their work and get in touch [here](#).

I joined Dogs Trust at their event to talk about the issue of puppy smuggling. The previous Government made great strides on this terrible practice, but still more work is needed to end it once and for all. You can read the report published by Dogs Trust [here](#).





I had a chance to catch up with Richard Hyslop, the Falkland Island Government's representative in Parliament. There are so many strong links between our area and the Islands, from our veterans' community to the operation of the Gosport Ferry. We talked about our shared heritage, ongoing partnerships and opportunities for strengthening ties.

I joined the Armed Forces Parliamentary Scheme course this year to learn more about the Army, how they train, think and operate.

I completed the Navy module of this programme in 2011 and felt that it was a brilliant way to get an insight into the vital work of our Armed Forces which so much of our local economy and workforce rely on.



I invited Southern Water bosses to visit the Gosport area. Peel Common Cllrs Philpott and Namdeo and I showed them the terrible state of the Carisbrooke Pond and raised our concerns. We then moved on to the Waste Treatment Centre to hear about the significant level of investment allocated to improve collection, processing and storage capacity of wastewater and sewage. This work will assist in preventing overspills to the Solent. Southern Water agreed to organise a public information event early next year and I will of course keep you posted.

I also caught up with the CEO of Portsmouth Water, who supply our drinking water, I was glad to hear that there are no current service disruptions or customer related issues.

I met with the wonderful team at Community Integrated Care on Dormy Way. CIC is one of the largest health and social care charities in the UK, providing life-changing support to people with learning disabilities, autism, and mental health concerns.

You can find out more about them and their Unfair to Care campaign, which stresses the disparity in pay for social care workers, [here](#).





I joined local postal staff at the Gosport Royal Mail sorting office to find out more about their work and had a chance to shadow postie Claudia as she started her rounds.

I was happy to attend the opening night of Fareham Live to see the fantastic performance of the Rocky Horror Show. I was extremely impressed by the new facility that is certainly an amazing addition to the Fareham Town Centre.

It was great to lead a democracy lesson with Year 6 students at St John's Primary School. We talked about what it is like being a Member of Parliament and working in the House of Commons and they all became Honourable Ladies and Gentlemen for the morning as we held a mini-debate.

Asda is now supporting primary schools across the UK through Cashpot for Schools. £7493.93 has been donated to schools in Gosport so far, with more funding available. You can read more about how to take part for the benefit of our local schools [here](#).

I am extremely proud that two of my three nominations for NHS Parliamentary Awards were chosen as winners. Congrats to the Wessex Kidney Centre for their Future NHS Award and the remarkable Paula McGowan OBE for the Oliver McGowan Mandatory Training on Learning Disability and Autism's very well-deserved Excellence in Education Award. This was my third year of nominating winners - a hat-trick of wins for my very deserving nominees!



Next month Parliament will begin to debate one of the most contentious issues of our day when Kim Leadbeater, a Labour MP, will introduce legislation to legalise assisted dying. I am keen to hear the thoughts of as many of you as possible before I cast my vote. I'm instinctively inclined to support a change in the law, as long as it includes robust protections that prevent anyone being coerced into a decision they don't really want. But I'd like to know your thoughts. You can write to me directly or complete a survey on my website [here](#).

So, that's it for October! As ever, my team and I are here for any questions, thoughts or concerns you may have. Please do get in touch via caroline.dinenage.mp@parliament.uk

Best wishes
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